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Spleenwort on the smooth mossy face of the cliff is in distinct contrast to that of the Pinnatifid Spleenwort in dry niches and pockets of the cliffs.

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## The Polypody

LILLIAN A. COLE

On May 20, 1916, I drove to Sennebec pond in Knox County, Maine, fastened my horse in somebody's doorway and then walked along a field road shaded by trees and carpeted with young ferns.

I ascended a hill of 500 feet elevation and found flowers and ferns that were a delight. Previously I had hunted for *Viola lanceolata* in low lands, for the books had told me to do so, so great was my surprise, when I found it on the summit of this hill of ledges, exposed to the sun's rays nearly all day.

Wending my way down to a brook in a ravine, I found a real fern garden—Nature's own production and handiwork. With difficulty, over wet stepping places and among brambles, I came to a boulder in that brook and found some polypody ferns that looked different than any I had ever seen. The fronds were larger, darker green, more lance-triangular, and as I turned them over, instead of the great big staring fruit dots I found small sori. I wondered if I had made a discovery of a new variety for our country.

These plants grew on an angle of the rock of but few degrees slant. They were directly over the water and were shaded by the surrounding trees.

I wondered how they could cling and thrive so well. In the careful effort to remove a few specimens, I fairly lifted a sheet of their intertwining roots, with a very little soil of leaf mold and sand which they were holding for themselves.

I sent a specimen of these polypodies to Mr. Jay G. Underwood of Hartland, Vt., and this is what he says about them:

"With regard to the Polypody would say this fern does vary very much according to its habitat. I have found forms in cold ravines, that are similar to the one you sent. Botanists do not, in this country, recognize these as of any definite difference requiring names. I think that in England a good many of these forms have been given names, but nothing of the sort has been attempted here, probably because the forms intergrade and do not seem to breed true."

So, now, I meditate upon the misfortune of the little Polypody's fate of being reared and thriving in our uncrowned Republic, when if living under the skies of the crowned Kingdom they might be given a name of their own. The brook still gurgles beneath their feet, and the rustling leaves over their canopy of green still whisper the name, "*Polypodium vulgare*."

UNION, ME.

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### Notes and News

An old letter, written in 1836 by Dr. Joseph Barratt of Middletown, Conn., to Dr. Torrey and now preserved at the New York Botanical Garden, contains an apparently unpublished detail in regard to the discovery of the hart's-tongue fern in central New York by Pursh. Dr. Barratt writes:

"I was glad to hear you had discovered *Scolopendrium vulgare* in N. Y. Some years since I conversed with Mr. J. Geddes about this fern. He told me he was with Pursh at the time he found it, and he exclaimed: 'I am better pleased at finding this plant than a five dollar bill.'—Mr. G. said it was near but not upon his premises."